

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF

## The School Committee

OF

## SOUTHBORO',

FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1858-9.



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J. M. HEWES, PRINTER, 81 CORNHILL.

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# R E P O R T .

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SOUTHBORO', MARCH 16th, 1859.

The School Committee for the year ending March, 1859, hereby Report :

WE publicly acknowledge the favor of Divine Providence in the general prosperity of our schools. There has been no prevailing sickness among the school-children, and we have not learned that any member of any school has been removed by death during the year. The teachers also, with slight exceptions, have enjoyed unimpaired health and vigor throughout the year.

At the time of our first visits to the Summer schools, several of the teachers complained of great difficulty in classifying their schools that arose from multiplicity of text books. Not to mention by name books which we approved,—we found in the schools four grades of Arithmetics, ten dissimilar Geographies, and four Spellers. We decided that Greenleaf's National Arithmetic is not needed, and is therefore not approved in town, except by special permission of the School Committee, to pupils who have completed the Common School Arithmetic. After deliberate reflection, the Committee set aside all the Spellers and Geographies then in use, and introduced in their stead Worcester's Speller, and two of Cornell's Geographical Series, viz: the Primary and the Intermediate. These changes produced uniformity in the text books in all the schools, awakened an increase of interest in study—and greatly facilitated the work of the teachers.

The teachers provided by the several agents were all approved by the Committee ; with scarcely an exception, they were disposed to carry out our plans, and second our efforts in every department. The Committee held several meetings with the teachers, and interchanged views upon discipline, upon the particular wants of the different schools, and upon the best modes of teaching the branches

of study pursued in the common schools. The Committee charged the teachers to use every effort to promote punctuality in the attendance of the children, and to maintain complete government over them all, as we regard the teacher responsible in both these particulars. We desired them to impart much general instruction, taking the text books as a basis of such instruction ;—to pass on from no topic of instruction until it was fully understood by the class ;—to apportion lessons to the ability of those who advance with difficulty, rather than to the ability of those who acquire more rapidly. We consider of prime importance that the pupil become minutely acquainted with the contents of his text book ; that he should memorize definitions and rules ; that by oral instruction, the use of black-boards, and every device of the teacher's art, he should be encouraged to transfer the truths on the page to the tablet of his mind ;—and that, the recitation should be made not a mere examination of the pupil's mastery of his task, but the best occasion to give instruction, line upon line, and precept upon precept,—and to train the pupil in exercising his own judgment, and discovering the utility of what he had learned from his book.

We requested faithful attention to be given to reading exercises :—that instruction should be given in this department, not only to make “ good readers,” but also with a view to the pleasure and profit of the pupil's reading during coming life, after he has passed from the instructions of the school-room. We desired the teachers,—in the Summer schools especially—to give the children constant drill in modes of notation, punctuation marks and other marks used in writing and printing, the use of capital letters, abbreviations, syllabication, and the various classifications of vowels and consonants, with exercises in their enunciation,—all of which are practically important, and may be incidentally taught in connection with the reading exercise and orthography ; a part of which were well taught in the Summer in the 1st, 2d, 5th, and 7th wards.

We take this occasion to call attention to a practice that has prevailed in several sections of the town, namely, the removing of children from school before the close of the term.

Are the parents aware how much mischief these removals produce ? A child has lost his interest in his books ; or has become offended with another child ; or does not like his seat in the school-

room ; or, having transgressed, has fallen under the teacher's reproof ; or wants to play, or to pick berries in berry time ;—or, the parent thinks his child is “ not learning well ;” or desires the child's little help in haying, or harvesting, or in the house ; and so, for some trivial reason, or for some small consideration children can earn, or hire which they can save, the schools have been repeatedly decimated, classes reduced, routine of school interrupted : the pupil removed from school unavoidably suffers ; he loses his place in the class ; loses his interest in study ; loses the benefit of reviews at the end of the term, and the stimulus the examination affords ; and gets the evil impression that the fruit of his labor is more precious than useful knowledge ; that “ schooling ” is not of much account. These removals have a mischievous influence on the schools also :—the reduced class wants the interest that full numbers give ; the teacher's ardor inevitably abates ; and some of the children wish that they did not “ have to go school,” that they were free from the restraints of the school-room, now so irksome. The Committee commend this subject to the thoughtful consideration of parents, and the friends of the schools.

At the beginning of the year we agreed that each member of the Committee should make the required visits to the schools as best suited his convenience, for this method would render our work easier, and, in this way, each term of school would be brought under the notice of the Committee on a greater number of occasions than if we made our three visits in company, thereby furnishing a larger amount of data for impartial judgment concerning the condition of the schools, and the character of the teaching. The (aggregate) number of visits made is 115. On comparing notes, we arrive at the following results :

WARD No. 1. Summer Term. MARY E. BRIGHAM, teacher. At our first visit we found this school entrusted to a teacher of energy and decision,—imparting life to every exercise of the school-room. The government was not so strict as we approve. The reading was not taught with the same care as in some of our schools. The classes in Arithmetic and Orthography were well drilled. Geography was intelligently taught. On the whole, this term was successful. We noticed the uniform neatness of the school-room, notwithstanding the shabbiness of the house.

Winter Term. HARRIET A. BRIGHAM, teacher. The school presented an interesting appearance at the opening. The teacher appeared to give herself assiduously to her work. She was faithful in all the detail and routine of school duties. The classes did not appear alike well on the last day; as some lacked familiarity of acquaintance with the ground passed over; and others displayed great readiness and precision. The pupils in Arithmetic need a patient drill in notation and numeration.

WARD 2. Summer Term. ELLEN C. RICE, teacher. The children in this ward always have an appearance of neatness and decorum. Every branch of study was well taught. There was some degree of mannerism in the reading: and a want of independence of the teacher in some recitations. Singing was a pleasant exercise in this school: this we heartily commend. Full attendance was maintained till the close. We consider this to be one of the most profitable of our Summer schools.

Winter Term. RICHARDSON GODDARD, teacher. All the scholars were interested in their books, and school exercises. The teacher enjoyed the good will of the entire school, and faithfully attended in an impartial manner to the wants of any one of his charge. The final examination, which was searching, and conducted with unusual firmness, was highly creditable to pupils and teacher. We were gratified to see a large number of voters present on the last day.

WARD 3. Summer Term. SARAH M. WIGHT of Westboro', teacher. The teacher was quite faithful, and kept the school in excellent order. The pupils learned mostly by rote. Reading was almost wholly a mere practice, without much guidance. The pupils in Geography were not sure, but were all we expected. At the final visit, the classes of young scholars in Arithmetic appeared very well. We marked the exercise in Physiology "perfect." We think this school needs special training in enunciation.

Winter Term. PETER P. HOWE, teacher. Mr. Howe sustained his former reputation in teaching. The interest of all the members of the school was unabated to the last. A good share of the instruction given was of a general character, mostly of practical value. We cannot speak well of the order maintained.

WARD 4. Summer Term. ANSTICE P. SMITH, teacher.

This large school is difficult ; for the pupils are backward, mostly small, and many of them have the appearance of being uncared for. The school-house is much dilapidated, and without ventilation. Praise should be awarded to several of the pupils for studiousness and progress. The government of the school was good, and the instruction fair.

Winter Term. CHARLES L. STORRS of Amherst, teacher. This gentleman was without experience in teaching. He zealously gave all his strength and skill to his business in school. Owing to his illness, the school closed abruptly without examination.

WARD 5. Summer Term. MARIA A. SAWIN, teacher. At the close of the term this school gave evidence of marked improvement in Punctuation and Mental Arithmetic, as well as in deportment. Geography was not very well taught or learned. The Reading was good, though somewhat monotonous. There is scarcely sufficient material in this district for a Summer school of the first order.

Winter Term. LOMIRA E. COLLINS, teacher. On entering the school-room, in the beginning of the term, we were agreeably impressed that this school was completely in the intelligent control of the teacher ; and we had afterwards no anxiety concerning her success. The older pupils deserve praise. Notwithstanding lack of material to make even one large class, the school was highly interesting and creditable. Arithmetic was well taught. The Reading classes displayed the evidence of excellent training, (and the need of like drill in terms to come.) The deportment of the pupils was unexceptionable ; their punctuality somewhat improved. There was an air of self-respect and refinement, which we were pleased to see. The teacher has our highest praise.

WARD 6. Summer Term. MARTHA E. BRIGHAM, teacher. This was her first school. There was some idleness, otherwise, the discipline was all we could ask. In a school so small as this, it is difficult to give animation to the exercises. As a whole, Miss B's. success was better than we expect from a novice in the multi-form work of a teacher. The examination showed progress.

Winter Term. C. MARIA NEWTON, teacher. The discipline was without fault ; not a moment was lost, not an idler was seen. The teacher was conscientious, patient, watchful. We were

especially pleased with an exercise in Etymology. Reading was taught admirably. And the same may be remarked of every other branch of study. We think it safe to say that, the people of this district have rarely, if ever, placed their children under better tuition than what they have received this winter. By the success of this school, and especially by the success of winter school No. 5, the great utility of employing female teachers in the winter was plainly demonstrated.

WARD 7. Summer Term. C. MARIA NEWTON of Westboro', teacher. This school is highly favored in respect to number and classification. Miss N. is a teacher of experience : is prompt and diligent. She was successful here, and the Committee were glad to find her employed in town in the winter.

Winter Term. C. S. BUSWELL of N. H., teacher. We always found this school full, and the pupils well disposed, wide awake, and studious. Mr. B. has good executive talent and aptness to teach. He made the best use of the text book and black-board. The pupils were trained to recite. Much instruction was given in time of recitation. The examination was satisfactory. Some of the misses showed great readiness in the analysis of rules in fractions : and generally the scholar could give the rule and the reason. The hours of school were pressed with by far too much : too much was attempted. The school imperatively needs an assistant teacher.

The Committee were sorry to see in Southville, as also in the Center Village, numbers of children playing in the streets instead of attending school.

The Committee earnestly recommend that the services of the following teachers be secured for the coming year, namely : Misses L. E. COLLINS, C. M. NEWTON, E. C. RICE, and MARY E. BRIGHAM.

HIGH SCHOOL. Spring Term. MARGARET MACGREGOR of Framingham, teacher. Winter Term. Miss MACGREGOR Principal ; ANNIE M. EATON Assistant. Two hundred dollars were appropriated for this school ; this sum was increased by subscriptions, to 577 dollars ; all of which has been expended, and has furnished three terms of free school, with an aggregate of 39 weeks. The Principal received \$400 for her services ; and the



Assistant \$5 per week, for 27 weeks. The whole number attending the school is 55 : 23 males ; 32 females. The greatest number, 44, attended during the second term ; 12 attended every term. The mean average is 33 per term. The expense is \$17.50 *per cap.* The average attendance for the year is 164 days. The students in this school came from every ward, as follows ; 20 from No. 1 ; 4 from No. 2 ; 12 from No. 3 ; 2 from No. 4 ; 6 from No. 5 ; 9 from No. 6 ; 2 from No. 7.

These statistics show that a school of this grade is demanded by the wants of the town, and that such a school can be sustained.

For terms of admittance, the Committee required of the pupil, to be prepared for examination in Arithmetic as far as fractions ; and in any part of Common School Geography ; we think we would also open the school next year to all over 15 years of age, without pressing such an examination.

The studies pursued were Latin, French, and Composition ; Declamation and Reading ; Astronomy, Geometry, Algebra, Book-keeping, Written and Mental Arithmetic, Drawing and Writing.

Great amount of labor has been performed by the teachers ; great amount of work has been accomplished by the pupils : and a very superior preparation is now made for a school of high order in the future. The pupils have been patiently drilled ; slowly and safely advanced : they have been impressed with the necessity of thoroughness, and the duty of self-reliance both in study and in deportment.

One of the great evils growing from the wide interval between the terms of our Common Schools, is, the pupil's unavoidable forgetting of what he has once learned ; on account of which he " must needs go over it " again and again from term to term, and from year to year,—generally with an ever new teacher ;—thus inducing the dangerous habit of forgetting ; and losing the stimulus afforded by novelty and perceptible progress. These evils are avoided by all who attend through the terms of our High School ; and, in such a school in town the coming year, we may safely predict that the pupils will not need to be put back to study and learn again what they seem to have mastered in the past year, for they will be prepared to begin their studies where they have left them at the close of the school.

The entire credit for the gratifying success of the school is awarded to the Principal.

With the help of past experience, we think that the studies can be so regulated, and the pupils so classified, as to require but one teacher during the coming year. There is great need of a small appropriation for the supply of school apparatus, maps, &c.; an intelligent teacher needs these helps, and they will repay a judicious outlay.

The Committee are informed of several pupils; some of whose behavior during the last term disclosed a sad want of good breeding; with such exception, the order of the school was perfect.

Aided by the report of the Board of Education we gather a few facts that ought justly to be laid before the town in connection with the statistical table appended.

The number of children between 5 and 15 years of age this year was 337: the number last year being 269. The whole amount of taxes raised was \$8,654.72, of which 16+ per cent. or \$1,400, were appropriated for school purposes in 1858-59. Estimating the income for the past year of all the taxable property of the town (at 5 per centum) to be \$42,712, then 4+ per cent. of this income, or \$1,900, were expended in all the schools, public and private.

1. In WORCESTER COUNTY, the town of *Worcester* stands at the head in respect to the *Comparative Amount* of money appropriated in 1857-58 for the education of each child between the ages of 5 and 15 years; and *W. Boylston*—No. 58, the lowest of all. *Southboro'* was No. 19, (against No. 26 in 1856-57). Worcester appropriated \$7.52 per cap.; *W. Boylston* \$2.67,9; *Southboro'*, \$4.64,7, with \$4.15,4 per cap. this year. The (aggregate) appropriation for the *State* was 6.04 for each child; for *Worcester County*, was \$4.69,2.

Of the 331 towns of the STATE, *Nahant* was (1857-8) No. 1, with an appropriation of \$20.00 for each child. *New Ashford* was 331, lowest in the table, appropriating \$1.50 for each child. *Southboro'* was No. 125, a gain upon 1856-7, when it was No. 166.

2. In respect to *Liberality* of appropriations in 1857-8 for purposes of education,—in THE COUNTY, *Clinton* was before all;

appropriating 4.1 mills on every dollar of all taxable property : (census of 1850) ; *N. Braintree* was lowest,—1.44 mills ; while *Southboro'* was No. 34 (being No. 44 in 1856-7) appropriating 2.09 mills on a dollar ;—this past year 2.35 mills were appropriated. In THE STATE, the town of *Wellsfleet* was at the head, expending 8.84 mills ; and *N. Ashford* was lowest, (No. 331) expending .47 mills : and *Southboro'* was No. 204, being No. 251 in 1856-7. In *Worcester County* this appropriation is 2.43 mills on the dollar ; in the *State* 2.27 mills.

3. In respect to Average Attendance of the children between 5 and 15 years of age, in the COUNTY, *Warren*, (1857-8) stood at the head of the 58 towns, and *Webster* at the foot : and *Southboro'* is No. 32 in the STATE, *Erving* is No. 1, *Stockbridge* No. 331 ; and *Southboro'*, No. 88. The mean ratio of attendance for the *State* was .74 ; for the County was .80. The ratio for this town was .83.

We congratulate the town upon the rank it holds in the County and State ; for in nearly all these statistics, *Southboro'* is above the average, and has gained from year to year. The Reports for 1858-59 will be better than for the year before ; and with the increased appropriations already made for the coming year, we may confidently expect considerable progress will be reported for 1859-60.

CHARLES AYER,	} <i>School</i>
RICHARDSON GODDARD,	
JONAS FAY,	
	} <i>Committee of</i>
	} <i>Southboro'.</i>

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#### BOOKS PRESCRIBED BY THE COMMITTEE.

Arithmetic—Emerson's First Part.  
 " Greenleaf's Series.  
 Readers—Sargent's Series.  
 Geography—Cornell's Primary and Intermediate.  
 Speller—Worcester's.  
 Grammar—Wells' ; Greene's Elements.  
 Writing—Payson and Dunton's Series.  
 Physiology—Cutter's.  
 Algebra—Greenleaf's.

